

PREPARED STATEMENT OF
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Before the Committee on Indian Affairs

U.S. Senate

May 4, 1999

Vice Chairman Inouye and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today on Census 2000 plans in "Indian country." We are glad that you have called this hearing to highlight this important subject. We are working very closely with our partners in the American Indian and Alaska Native communities, several of whom are here today, to improve the way we take the census. We can only do this through our joint efforts.

The 1990 census showed a national total of 1,959,234 American Indians and Alaska Natives. This represented a 38 percent increase over the previous census and was attributed to improved enumeration methods and increased self-identification. Despite the increase in numbers, enumerating American Indians and Alaska Natives, especially American Indians living on reservations, has presented some unique challenges in past decennial censuses. The 1990 census undercount rate for American Indians living on reservations was 12.2 percent, as measured by the 1990 Post Enumeration Survey. This was the highest undercount rate of any group in the Nation and was much higher than the undercount rate for Non-Hispanic Whites, which was less than one percent (0.7 percent). This is unacceptable and we must do better in Census 2000. We must improve our enumeration of American Indians and Alaska Natives and reduce this extraordinarily high undercount.

The Bureau of the Census counts as an American Indian or Alaska Native anyone who declares himself or herself to be such. The data on race will be collected on all Census 2000 questionnaires following the "Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity" that were issued by the Office of Management and Budget in October 1997. Differences between the questions on race for the 1990 and 2000 census are described in a fact sheet that we have made available to you.

Consultation and Testing

In preparation for Census 2000, we have established close consultation with the American Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages to formulate plans for testing and developing enumeration procedures and methods and we have benefitted from their advice. We have also benefitted from

the advice of the National Congress of American Indians' representative on the Secretary's 2000 Census Advisory Committee. We formed the Census Advisory Committee on the American Indian and Alaska Native Populations and have also benefitted greatly from their advice and recommendations on a wide range of issues critical to the planning and development of Census 2000 programs. I am pleased that members of that committee will testify today. For example, based on their recommendations, we tested the category "American Indian or Alaska Native" with a write-in line to specify tribe in the race question. The test results led to the inclusion of this category in the Census 2000 race question. Also, at their recommendation, we conducted test censuses in 1996 on the Fort Hall American Indian Reservation in Idaho and the Pueblo of Acoma and trust lands in New Mexico. These tests were critical in developing and refining our Census 2000 enumeration plans for American Indian reservations and Alaska Native villages. A major objective was the refinement of quality check procedures for ensuring the most accurate census of these population groups. I'll talk more about this quality check later.

Also, as part of the just completed Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal, we demonstrated our Census 2000 plans in the Menominee County, Wisconsin site, which includes the Menominee American Indian Reservation. Again, a major feature of the Dress Rehearsal was the use of the quality check procedures for ensuring the most accurate census. Several evaluations have been released for this Dress Rehearsal and others are coming out on a flow basis.

Partnership

We are doing everything we can to improve the count of American Indians and Alaska Natives and the partnership program is a key component of this effort. The Census Bureau realizes that it cannot do everything alone, we do not have all the answers, and that is why we value so highly our partnerships with the American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

The Census Bureau has designed a broad-reaching American Indian and Alaska Native Program to increase participation in the census by American Indian and Alaska Native governments. The Commerce Department's 1995 American Indian and Alaska Native Policy guides Census Bureau initiatives for American Indian and Alaska Native communities. This policy recognizes tribal sovereignty and the unique legal and political status of federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments. It is in full accord with President Clinton's 1994 White House Memorandum on "Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments" and the 1998 Executive Order on "Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments," and it requires all Commerce agencies, including the Census Bureau, to consult and work with tribal governments on all policies that may affect their communities.

One of the key components of our program is the Tribal Governments Liaison Program, in which we invite each federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native government to appoint a liaison for Census 2000. I have brought along copies of our handbook for this program. Members of the Census Advisory Committee on the American Indian and Alaska Native Populations reviewed and provided very helpful comments on the drafts of the handbook. The handbook describes the program and suggests activities for the liaisons. Suggested activities

include establishing a Tribal Complete Count Committee, promoting the census at community events, and identifying sites for questionnaire assistance centers; helping recruit census enumerators and identifying facilities for recruitment, testing, and training activities; reviewing and updating address, map, and boundary information and helping the Census Bureau select enumeration methods that are appropriate to the local community; and, in the post-census period, participating in debriefings and focus groups to evaluate Census 2000 procedures.

I have also brought copies of our Tribal Complete Count Committee Handbook. This handbook suggests specific promotion and outreach activities that these committees could undertake. I should mention that both of these handbooks were prepared in consultation with Orbis Associates, a tribally owned organization. We believe these handbooks will serve as an excellent resource to tribes as they conduct census activities in preparation for Census 2000.

Participating in these programs is one way to increase involvement in both the planning and implementation of Census 2000, resulting in a more complete and accurate count of American Indians and Alaska Natives living on and off tribal lands. Nationally, about 460 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native governments have appointed a liaison and we continue to follow up with the others to encourage their participation.

Beginning today, the Census Bureau is sponsoring a series of regional meetings to bring together both the American Indian and Alaska Native leaders and the liaisons in one conference. The first regional meeting is being held today in Anchorage and involves the Alaska Native communities. The regional meetings will be completed by September.

Complementing our outreach and partnership with American Indian and Alaska Native governments, the Census Bureau is also actively pursuing partnership with state-recognized tribes. This fall, the Census Bureau will sponsor a national meeting to which we will invite state tribal leaders. To reach those American Indians and Alaska Natives who do not live on tribal lands, the Census Bureau is identifying key community service organizations and we are inviting some of the leaders of these organizations to our IO regional meetings.

The Census Bureau has several different voluntary geographic programs associated with Indian Country. These programs provide information that is key for Census 2000 enumeration and the preparation of the O.,ta tabulations that will follow. For each federally recognized tribe that has a reservation or off-reservation trust lands, the Census Bureau sends out Boundary and Annexation Survey maps and invites tribes to review them and make corrections. This is the first census in which we have asked tribes to certify their boundaries; this is in line with the President's policy on government-to-government relationship. Within reservations and off-reservation trust lands, tribes can delineate statistical areas, meaningful for tribal purposes, including communities for which the Census Bureau can present census data. For each federally recognized tribe without a reservation or off-reservation trust lands, the Census Bureau asks tribal officials to identify an area over which the tribe has significant influence. These boundary designations are the basis for collecting and tabulating census data, so their delineation and accuracy are important for tribes.

Based on these boundary designations, the Census Bureau produces address lists for every

reservation, off-reservation trust land area, or tribal statistical area. These lists and maps are what census enumerators use as they try to ensure that every person 'Living within tribal areas is included in Census 2000. It is critical that each tribe ensures that the Census Bureau is using accurate and up-to-date address and geographic information. We invite tribal officials to review their portion of the census address list as well as the accompanying maps; if any housing units, streets, or roads are missing, the Census Bureau needs to know so the information can be updated. Anyone reviewing Census 2000 address information, which is protected by the confidentiality guarantees of Title 13, must pledge not to divulge that confidential information to anyone else. Violations of census confidentiality can carry penalties of up to a \$5,000 fine and up to 5 years in prison.

During our Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) Program, some tribal governments were concerned about local governments seeing addresses that were located on tribal lands. Throughout the LUCA program, we had expressed to all governments, that the Census Bureau's address list is confidential and must be used only to ensure the most accurate Census 2000 possible. To further remind governments of this important confidentiality issue, we sent letters to every LUCA participant that has a geographic overlap with tribal lands to reemphasize the importance of confidentiality. Specifically, we said:

The information contained in the address list and other LUCA material is only for the use of the people who signed the confidentiality agreement, and only for the sole purpose of reviewing and providing any corrections to the Census Bureau. We consider any other use to be in violation of the confidentiality agreement. We will seek to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law any government that violates the confidentiality agreement.

The Census Bureau also reminded these participants that when a tribal government is participating in LUCA, and a county or city also is reviewing the list, the updates from the tribal government will take precedence.

Many challenges exist for collecting data in the remote areas of Alaska. We will actually begin the census in the remote areas of Alaska in January, instead of April. Enumerators will fly into the remote areas while the ground is still frozen and planes can land to list the housing units and enumerate the population. In April, when the ground begins to thaw, it would be more difficult for planes to land and villagers would be more geographically dispersed.

I have mentioned that we are asking each tribal government to establish a Tribal Government Complete Count Committee. Now, I want to talk just briefly about other things we are doing in the area of outreach and promotion. Recognizing the unique relationship between the United States government and American Indian and Alaska Native governments, we have established an official logo for the American Indian and Alaska Native promotional campaign. The logo was the work of G & G, an American Indian firm that is developing and implementing the national promotional campaign for the American Indian and Alaska Native populations. We have produced or will be producing various promotional items with this logo including bumper stickers, bags, hats, tee-shirts, pens and pencils, and so forth. We have brought some of these items today. These will be handed out at community meetings, wacipis, pow-wows, and conferences to spur further interest in the census. We will also produce posters and other visual

arts. And there will be an American Indian and Alaska Native component to our paid advertising campaign for Census 2000. G & G is currently conducting extensive research and consultation with the American Indian community to develop an effective and relevant message and marketing strategy.

We are working closely with the American Indian and Alaska Native communities on recruiting temporary census workers. Our goal is to hire residents of the communities to conduct the census. In our Denver Region, for example, almost all the enumerators working on our address listing operation on tribal lands were American Indians. This success was accomplished through the close consultation we had with tribal leaders and their help in pinpointing media outlets where we could publicize census jobs. We also worked to reduce barriers to hiring local workers. As one example, we were able to provide money for gas to those workers who were in need prior to receiving their first check.

Accuracy

Now, I would like to talk a little more about what we're doing to ensure accuracy in Census 2000. Following the 1990 census, President Bush and the Congress urged the Census Bureau to design a census for 2000 that would reverse the decline in measured accuracy from the 1980 to the 1990 census. Part of the initial design recommended by the Bureau to meet this difficult challenge was set aside by the Supreme Court, when it ruled that sampling could not be used for purposes of apportioning seats in the House of Representatives among the states.

The Bureau has turned its attention to a full enumeration design - one that is operationally robust and innovative and that includes extensive partnership efforts, paid advertising, locally based recruitment of enumerators, user friendly census forms, state-of-the-art data capture technologies, and much more. Our first and most important effort is to put a census form into the hands of every single household in America, as well as enumerating those who live in group quarters (such as college dormitories) or who have no usual home. This robust design notwithstanding, we do not anticipate that results for 2000 will be more accurate than those for 1990. This is true both nationally and for the American Indian and Alaska Native populations.

There is a simple reason. The factors that led to a higher undercount in 1990 than in 1980 are even more present in American society today. More Americans are living in irregular housing or are transient; more Americans are isolated or eager to avoid any attention from government; more Americans are cynical or uncooperative when it comes to what they view as government intrusion. The census forms have to fight through more mail to even be noticed. Civic participation rates - note voter turnout - continue to decline.

In short, the Bureau - using traditional counting methods - must run harder to stay in place. We will run harder; we hope to stay in place.

Moreover, the Bureau knows that the rate at which individuals are missed is not evenly spread across all population groups. I have already mentioned the high undercount rates for American Indians living on reservations in 1990. Although Census 2000 includes major operations

specifically focused on reducing the differential undercount, it is not likely that they will eliminate it. The Census Bureau strongly hopes to be proven wrong in its assessment that neither the overall accuracy levels nor the differential undercount rates for Census 2000 will show improvement over 1990, but it has a professional responsibility to share with the country its best current judgment.

Finally, we consider a question much discussed since the Supreme Court decision - will there be adjusted numbers for purposes other than apportionment?

The task of a statistical agency is to provide the most accurate numbers that it can. To help us achieve that goal, we intend to include as part of Census 2000, a final accuracy and coverage check as we have done for a half-century. This 300,000 household survey is called the Accuracy and Coverage Evaluation. This quality audit will tell the Nation how many persons were missed in the census, as well as their characteristics and the areas where they live. This survey will produce estimates of accuracy of the census for American Indians living in American Indian areas. It is the Census Bureau's report card on its own performance, for the Bureau takes as much professional pride in carefully reporting how inaccurate it is as it does in working to be accurate in the first place. It is also the basis for correcting the initial data, to eliminate the undercounts.

The Census Bureau has informed the Secretary of Commerce that it is feasible to generate these more accurate census results on a schedule and at a level of geographic detail that makes them available and suitable for legislative redistricting purposes and for the formulas that allocate federal funds, as well as for statistical and program purposes.

Mr. Vice Chairman, this concludes my testimony and I would be happy to answer any questions.